

BOOK REVIEW

BOBBY J. WARD. 2004. **The Plant Hunter's Garden.** (ISBN 0-88192-696-5, hbk.). Timber Press Inc. 133 S.W. Second Ave, Suite 450, Portland, OR 97204-3527, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.timberpress.com, mail@timberpress.com, 503-227-2878, 1-800-327-5680, 503-227-3070 fax). \$39.95, 340 pp., b&w drawings, color photos, bibliography, index, 7 3/8" × 10 3/8".

If you get excited at the sight of the season's first seed and plant catalogs, you should pick up a copy of the new book *The Plant Hunters Garden*. Author Bobby Ward includes the profiles of 32 modern day plant hunters, the persons responsible for many of the plant offerings in those catalogs. The people included are from throughout the world and are associated with an assortment of nurseries, horticultural research associations, and/or small companies offering plants or seeds. The focus of the included plant collectors is very diverse: native plants, regional plants, "hardy" plants, rock and alpine gardens, plants/seeds from inaccessible locales, unusual or hard to find species or varieties, and even collectors with very specific interests, such as bulbs, shade plants, and single genera.

Each chapter focuses on one plant hunter/company. First off, the person or company is profiled giving some background information on the collector's history and plant interests. Then some information on travels and exploration for new plants is discussed. A conclusion for each includes a picture of the collector and company contact information. The bulk of each chapter concentrates on the plants collected by, introduced by, grown by and promoted by the various plant hunters. The chapters are filled with colorful photos of plants, as well as some origin descriptions and growing zone information for various plants. Throughout the chapters are brief stories about how some plants were discovered or how the person met someone who introduced or passed along the plant to them. The descriptions of the discovery of these plants were a little less adventurous than this reader expected, but these discoveries are still interesting to read about. An example of such a discovery is that of the small, white flowered, bronze leaved plant *Jabrosa volkmannii* by John Watson and Anita Flores, found growing in pumice on the side a volcano. There is also interesting information on how these hunters cultivate their finds. For instance the book includes a few "rock gardeners" growing species in various rock crevices including Panayoti Kelaidis of the Denver Botanical Gardens who designed and manages a 450,000 kg, 0.4 ha rock garden with 4000+ plant species. The book concludes with a chapter on invasive plants that gives an honest look at what weeds and invasive species are and the variety of vectors of their introduction.

If you are a gardener or horticulturalist who thrills at the anticipation of new species and varieties of plants, you will thoroughly enjoy reading this book and will benefit from the contact information supplied for each collector. Travel with these plant hunters to exotic locales to share the thrill of discovery, excitement of their plant finds and cultivation experiences within the pages of Ward's *The Plant Hunter's Garden*.—Lee Luckeydoo, Herbarium, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.